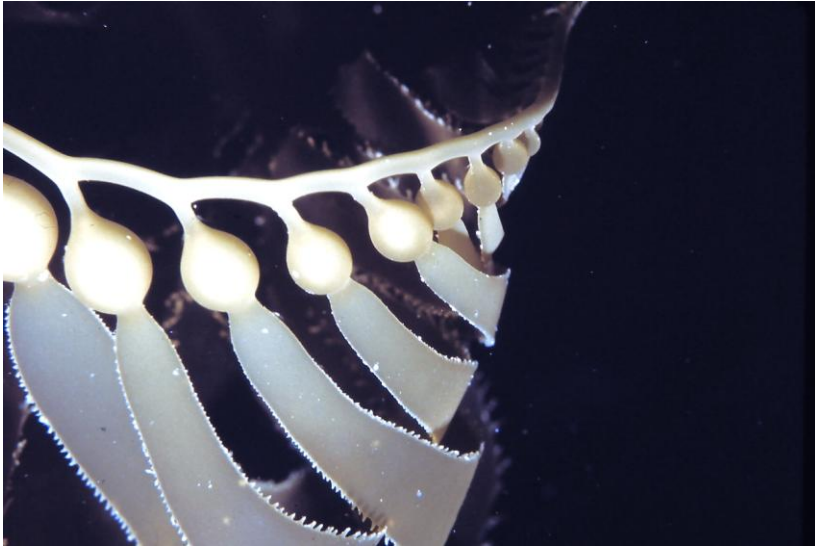


Giant Pacific Kelp



Description: Kelp is not a plant but is a type of algae. Giant Pacific Kelp can grow 10-12 inches per day! That's faster than tropical bamboo. Kelp has a long stipe, blades (similar to leaves on a tree) and gas-filled bladders that help it float to the surface to get energy from the sun. Kelp can grow to be as long as 175 feet! Kelp has no roots but has a holdfast that allows it to stick to rocky surfaces. So, kelp gets its nutrients directly from the water, unlike a typical plant.

Where they are Found: Giant Pacific Kelp can be found from the tip of the Baja California Peninsula to Santa Cruz, California. It can also be found at the tip of South America, Australia, and New Zealand.

Feeding: Many animals, including urchins, feed on kelp but kelp receives its nutrients and energy by converting energy from the sun (photosynthesis).

Interesting Facts: Many of the foods that you eat and products that you use contain an ingredient from seaweed. Some are called algin, alginate, and carageenan. Many are used as an emulsifying or thickening agent and can be found in things like ice cream, cosmetics and even toothpaste!

WOW!!! Some animals, like sea otters, wrap their babies in the kelp to keep them afloat while they hunt for food!